

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6309

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PORT LOUIS 1061

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MP

SUBJECT: PRE-ELECTION ROUND-UP: DECEMBER 1

REF: PORT LOUIS 1042

SUMMARY: A RECORD NUMBER OF 409 CANDIDATES HAVE SIGNED UP TO RUN FOR THE 70 SEATS OF THE MAURITIUS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO DROP SOMEWHAT THROUGH VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWALS BY THE DECEMBER 3 DEADLINE, THE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES COMPETING FOR EACH SEAT WILL REMAIN HIGH. ONLY 21 OF THE 31 REGISTERED PARTIES FINALLY PUT UP CANDIDATES. OF THESE ONLY THE THREE MAJOR PARTIES -- INDEPENDENCE PARTY (IP), PMSD, AND THE MMM -- HAVE MOUNTED FULL-SCALE CAMPAIGNS AND ARE PREDICTED TO DIVIDE THE BULK OF THE SEATS. OTHER PARTIES SUCH AS THE UDM, IFB, PSP AND THE MMMSP WILL PROBABLY WIN A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF SEATS. PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM WORKED BEHIND THE SCENES TO PATCH UP DIVISIONS INSIDE THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY (LABOR/CAM). AT SEPARATE PUBLIC RALLIES THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY AND PMSD LAUNCHED HEAVY ATTACKS AGAINST THE MMM AS THE "COMMUNIST" PARTY, LENDING WEIGHT TO ALLEGATIONS THAT A SECRET ACCORD HAS BEEN STRUCK BETWEEN THESE TWO PARTIES. THE MMM CONTINUED ITS WELL-ORGANIZED CAMPAIGN, AND WASTED NO TIME IN COUNTERING CHARGES LEVELLED AT IT BY THE IP AND PMSD, UNLEASHING A FEW OF ITS OWN FOR GOOD MEASURE. END SUMMARY

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1. A RECORD NUMBER OR 413 CANDIDATES REGISTERED ON NOMINATION DAY, NOVEMBER 25, TO COMPETE FOR THE 70 SEATS OF OF THE MAURITIAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. OF THE MAJOR PARTEES THE FOLLOWING ARE RUNNING THE INDICATED NUMBER OF CANDIDATES: INDEPENDENCE PARTY-

62; PMSD - 59; MMM - 60; UDM - 38; IFB - 31; PSP (HAWOLDAR)
- 19; MMMSP - 15; PCR - 16. THERE ARE ALSO ABOUT 37 OTHER
CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR SMALLER PARTIES AND A TOTAL OF 74
INDEPENDENTS. THERE ARE 14 WOMEN CANDIDATES. OF THE 31
PARTIES WHICH REGISTERED FOR THE ELECTIONS ONLY 21 ENDED UP
PRESENTING CANDIDATES. FOUR CANDIDATES WERE LATER DISQUALIFIED
FOR UNEXPLAINED REASONS, MAKING A TOTAL OF 409 PERSONS RUNNING
FOR ELECTION, OR AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 20 CANDIDATES FOR THE
THREE SEATS IN EACH DISTRICT. THE DISTRICT WITH THE LARGEST
NUMBER OF CANDIDATES HAS 26 RUNNING (MAHEBOURG-PLAINE MAGNIEN)
AND THE SMALLEST IS THE RODRIGUES DISTRICT WHICH HAS ONLY EIGHT
CANDIDATES FOR ITS TWO SEATS. REGISTERED CANDIDATES ARE
PERMITTED, HOWEVER, TO WITHDRAW BY DECEMBER 3. (COMMENT:
IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT THE RACE WILL BE MOSTLY BETWEEN
THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY (IP), THE PMSD AND THE MMM. THE OTHER
PARTIES ARE NOT RUNNING ENOUGH CANDIDATES TO BE MAJOR FACTORS
IN THE ELECTION, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY SUCCEED IN ELECTING A FEW
CANDIDATES.)

2. THE GOM CALLED A MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MAJOR
PARTIES ON NOVEMBER 29 AND DECIDED ON AN ALLOCATION OF RADIO AND
TELEVISION TIME DURING THE PERIOD DECEMBER 4 TO 19. THE MAJOR
PORTION OF THE AVAILABLE TIME WAS GIVEN TO THE FOUR LARGEST
PARTIES WHICH ARE PRESENTING CANDIDATES FOR AT LEAST 50 PERCENT
OF THE SEATS AND THEREFORE HAVE A CHANCE OF WINNING THE ELECTIONS.
ONLY PARTIES PRESENTING MORE THAN SIX CANDIDATES WERE GIVEN
TIME ON THE GOVERNMENT BROADCASTING SERVICES. NINE PARTIES
QUALIFIED FOR PORTIONS OF AVAILABLE TIME, WHICH WAS AWARDED
IN FIVE-MINUTE UNITS TO BE USED IN ANY TIME-BLOCKS THE PARTIES
CHOOSE. THE FOLLOWING WERE THE AWARDS OF TIME MADE: INDEPENDENCE
PARTY - 145 MINUTES; PMSD - 100 MINUTES; MMM - 80 MINUTES;
UDM - 80 MINUTES; IFB - 45 MINUTES; PSP - 20 MINUTES; PCR -
20 MINUTES; MMMSP - 20 MINUTES; SOUTHERN PARTY - 10 MINUTES.
THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY, BEING THE GOVERNMENT PARTY, WILL HAVE
THE RIGHT TO PRESENT THE FIRST PROGRAM AS WELL AS THE LAST,
IN ACCORDANCE WITH BRITISH PRACTICE. THE MMM REPRESENTATIVE
AT THE MEETING PROPOSED THAT IN ADDITION TO THESE PARTY
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PROGRAMS A SERIES OF ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES BE BROADCAST ALSO. THIS IDEA IS BEING
CONSIDERED.

3. IN THE FACE OF THE LABOR PARTY'S CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL
DIVISIONS (REFTTEL), RAMGOOLAM IS REPORTEDLY WORKING HARD
BEHIND THE SCENES TO BRING ABOUT A DEGREE OF UNITY. THIS IS
THE GRAVEST CRISIS IN THE HISTORY OF THE LABOR PARTY, ACCORDING
TO INDEPENDENT, L'EXPRESS, WHICH DESCRIBES THE SITUATION AS
FOLLOWS: "THE FIGHT IS OVER THE SUCCESSION TO LEADERSHIP.
EACH OF THE PERSONS ASPIRING TO THE LEADERSHIP HAS CREATED A
PRESSURE GROUP. THE FUTURE OF EACH ASPIRANT WILL DEPEND ON
THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND MINISTERS WHO WILL BE

ELECTED FROM AMONGST THAT PERSON'S SUPPORTERS. THE QUESTION IS NO LONGER OF CHOOSING THE BEST CANDIDATES; FOR RAMGOOLAM IT IS A QUESTION OF PRESERVING THE EQUILIBRIUM OF FORCES AND NOT PERMITTING ANY GROUP TO ATTAIN SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO TAKE THE LEADERSHIP AWAY FROM HIM. UP UNTIL RECENTLY RAMGOOLAM'S PRIVILEGE OF CHOOSING HIS SUCCESSOR WAS NOT CONTESTED. THE PRINCIPAL PERSONS VYING FOR THE LEADERSHIP (BOOLELL, JAGATSINGH, GHURBURRUN, RINGADOO) HAVE USED INSISTENT PRESSURE ON HIM TO CHOOSE THEIR SUPPORTERS AS CANDIDATES. RAMGOOLAM HAS ALSO HAD TO DEAL WITH THE INSISTENCE OF VARIOUS CASTE GROUPS FOR ADEQUATE REPRESENTATION. RAMGOOLAM ALSO HAS HAD TO FACE THE SITUATION CREATED BY THE DEFECTION OF HAWOLDAR AND HIS GROUP, WHICH REPORTEDLY HAS THE MORAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF CERTAIN POWERFUL LABORITES." (THE PRESS REPORTED THAT HAWOLDAR'S PSP, IN A FURTHER CHALLENGE TO THE LABOR PARTY, PLANS TO RECRUIT TEN OR MORE OF THE REGISTERED INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES TO RUN UNDER ITS BANNER.

4. ON THE CAMPAIGN HUSTINGS THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY CONTINUED TO ATTACK THE MMM AS A "COMMUNIST" MOVEMENT. IN THEIR FIRST OPEN-AIR RALLY IN THEIR HOME DISTRICT, LABOR PARTY LEADERS BOOLESS AND JAGATSINGH (SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PARTY) STRESSED THE NECESSITY OF KEEPING THE COMMUNISTS FROM POWER. BOOLELL SAID THAT THE MMM WOULD ELIMINATE THE RIGHT OF INHERITANCE AND THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE ONE'S JOB, AND HE STATED THAT THE MMM IS FINANCED BY HUGE SUMS OF MONEY SENT BY A COMMUNIST COUNTRY. LATER JAGATSINGH GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED FULL CONFIDENCE THAT THE IP WILL WIN THE ELECTIONS. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE PARTY'S PROGRAM WILL BE PUBLISHED WITHIN A FEW DAYS. HE SAID IT WOULD INCLUDE SOME " ADDITIONAL REVOLUTIONARY MEASURES". THE PARTY WAS THE ONLY REASONABLE PARTY WITH A PROGRAM WITHOUT ANY EXTREME IDEAS OF ANY KIND, HE CLAIMED. THOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT HIS PARTY HAS A PROBLEM WITH YOUNG VOTERS, HE SAID IT WILL DO WELL IN SOME URBAN AREAS AS WELL AS IN THE RURAL AREAS WHERE ITS STRENGTH IS USUALLY FOUND. JAGATSINGH CALLED HASWOLDAR'S ESTABLISHMENT OF A RIVAL PARTY A "BAD DECISION". HE SAID HAWOLDAR HAD REFUSED TO SUBMIT A LETTER ASKING FOR A LABOR PARTY CANDIDACY WHICH WAS WHY HE COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR ONE. JAGATSINGH ADDED THAT THE PSP WAS NOT A TRUE POLITICAL PARTY AND IT WOULD NOT WIN A SINGLE SEAT. (HAWOLDAR'S ANSWER THE NEXT DAY TO JAGATSINGH'S EXPLANATION OF HOW THE SOCIALIST PROGRESSIVE PARTY WAS ESTABLISHED WAS CARRIED IN L'EXPRESS. HAWOLDAR DENIED THAT THE PSP IS SIMPLY A BATCH OF PEOPLE WHO WERE REFUSED CANDIDACIES BY THE LABOR PARTY. HE CITED A NUMBER WHO WERE NOT IN THIS CATEGORY. HAWOLDAR ALSO SAID IT IS UP TO THE VOTERS TO DETERMINE WHAT IS A REAL POLITICAL PARTY AND WHAT ISN'T.)

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5. PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM, AT AN IP RALLY ON NOVEMBER 30, WAS QUOTED AS STATING: "THE LABOR PARTY IS NOT HELPED BY FOREIGN POWERS. THE CIA, SOUTH AFRICAN AGENTS AND COMMUNISTS ARE WORKING IN MAURITIUS. WHO IS BEHIND THE PMSD? WHO IS BEHIND THE MMM? MAURITIANS SHOULD ASK THEMSELVES THESE QUESTIONS ... MAURITIUS IS A MULTI-RACIAL AND MULTI-CULTURAL COUNTRY. WILL IT BE THE SAME UNDER A COMMUNIST REGIME? THE COMMUNISTS FAILED IN THE SEYCHELLES BUT SUCCEEDED IN MADAGASCAR. WILL MAURITIANS PERMIT COMMUNISM TO IMPLANT ITSELF IN MAURITIUS, PUTTING IN PERIL THEIR RELIGION AND CULTURE?" SATCAM BOOLELL, SPEAKING AT THE SAME RALLY, DENOUNCED THE MMM FOR ITS PROGRAM OF NATIONALIZATIONS. HE SAID THAT THE RESULTS OF A MMM VICTORY WOULD BE THAT THE BANKS WOULD CLOSE THEIR DOORS, MONEY WOULD CEASE TO CIRCULATE, FOREIGN INVESTORS WOULD LEAVE, THE EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE WOULD DISAPPEAR, 60,000 MAURITIANS WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS. "THE COMMON MARKET BUYS OUR SUGAR AT A REMUNERATIVE PRICE; THEY WILL NOT BUY COMMUNIST SUGAR. GOOD-BYE PROGRESS* GOODBYE PROSPERITY*"

6. TO ADD CONFUSION TO LABOR PARTY WOES LAST WEEK, MINISTER OF FISHERIES MODUN ANNOUNCED HIS PLANS TO RUN AS AN INDEPENDENT AFTER BEING REFUSED A LABOR PARTY SLOT. HE THEN WAS INCLUDED ON THE IP SLATE IN HIS (AND RAMGOOLAM'S) PAMPLEMOUSSES/TRIOLET DISTRICT, BUT THE NEXT DAY WAS DROPPED FROM THE SLATE TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT AGAIN, THIS LONG-SUFFERING, DECENT MAN REFUSED TO BLAME RAMGOOLAM FOR HIS TREATMENT. HE SAID HE CONFIDENTIAL

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WOULD NOT RUN AGAINST RAMGOOLAM. ON THE OTHER HAND, GAETAN DE CHAZAL, A VERY POPULAR FORMER MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY FROM CUREPIPE, AGREED TO RUN AS AN IP CANDIDATE IN THAT DISTRICT. HE HAD REGISTERED ON NOMINATION DAY AS AN INDEPENDENT. HE WAS ELECTED IN 1967 AS A PMSD CANDIDATE, RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENT IN 1970, THEN JOINED THE UDM, BUT

LATER QUIT THAT PARTY ALSO. HE HAS A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING A SEAT FOR THE IP IN THE CUREPIPE DISTRICT, WHICH IS A TRADITIONAL PMSD STRONGHOLD.

7. THE PMSD CAMPAIGN GAINED MOMENTUM AS DUVAL INTENSIFIED HIS "ANTI-COMMUNIST" CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MMM. IN AN ARTICLE IN LE POPULAIRE HE WROTE: "THERE EXISTS ONLY ONE COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WHERE THE COMMUNISTS OBTAINED POWER THROUGH ELECTIONS: CHILE, AND WE KNOW THE TRAGEDY WHICH FOLLOWED THERE. SHALL WE BE THE SECOND COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WHICH WILL DELIVER ITSELF IN THAT MANNER TO THE COMMUNISTS, WITH HANDS AND FEET TIED, THROUGH FREE ELECTIONS, UNDER THE PRETEXT THAT WITH THE APPROACH OF ELECTIONS RED TURNS TO PINK AND THE DEVIL GOES TO CONFESSION?" THE PMSD'S GREATEST SUCCESS OF THE WEEK WAS ITS NATIONAL RALLY HELD AT THE CHAMPS DE MARS IN PORT LOUIS ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28. ESTIMATES OF THE ATTENDANCE BY VARIOUS OBSERVERS RANGED FROM 20,000 TO 125,000. THE LIKELIEST FIGURE WAS SOMETHING AROUND 50,000 OR LESS, ACCORDING TO THE POLICE. IN ANY CASE, REGARDLESS OF THE EXACT SIZE OF THE CROWD, IT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE DEMONSTRATION OF THE PMSD'S ABILITY TO MOBILIZE ITS SUPPORTERS FROM THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND, AND IT GAVE THE PARTY A PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST AS WELL. ACCORDING TO OBSERVERS, THOSE ATTENDING WERE PRACTICALLY ALL MEMBERS OF THE "GENERAL POPULATION," THAT IS, CREOLES AND FRANCO-MAURITIANS. APPARENTLY THERE WERE VERY FEW INDO-MAURITIANS IN ATTENDANCE. (THE MMM PAPER, LE MILITANT, CLAIMED THAT THE CROWD WAS MOSTLY "WHITES," WHICH IS HARDLY POSSIBLE SINCE THERE ARE NOT THAT MANY ON THE ISLAND.) THE THEME OF THE RALLY WAS "ANTI-COMMUNISM". IN HIS ADDRESS DUVAL SPOKE OF PRISONS, CONCENTRATION CAMPS, AND OTHER DIRE RESULTS SHOULD THE MMM COME TO POWER. HE MADE A BRIEF, LIGHT-HEARTED ATTACK ON THE LABOR PARTY BY SAYING THAT IS "DEAD" (AT LEAST IN THE TOWNS, WHICH "BELONG" TO THE PMSD) AND CALLING FOR A MOMENT OF SILENCE TO BE OBSERVED. DUBAL HINTED THAT THE PMSD MAY NOT WORK VERY HARD TO ELECT SOME OF ITS CANDIDATES IN RURAL AREAS IN ORDER TO HELP THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY DEFEAT THE

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"COMMUNISTS" IN THOSE DISTRICTS. DUVAL ALSO MENTIONED THE UDM INDIRECTLY BY ALLUDING TO THE NECESSITY OF "KILLING MOSQUITOES WITH FLYLOX" (THE PMSD CALLS THE UDM THE "UNION DES MOUSTIQUES").

8. THE MMM PAPER, LE MILITANT, CONTINUED TO CLAIM THAT THE PMSD AND THE IP HAVE MADE A DEAL WHEREBY THE FORMER IS RUNNING "SUICIDAL" CANDIDATES IN RURAL AREAS AND THE IP IS RUNNING SURE LOSERS IN THE TOWNS. IT ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THE FACT THAT THE ONLY DISTRICT WHERE THE PMSD IS RUNNING NO CANDIDATES IS THE DISTRICT OF BOOLELL AND JAGATSINGH, LEADERS OF LABOR'S "RIGHT WING." THERE HAS INDEED BEEN CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION THAT IN FACT AN ACCORD BETWEEN THE PMSD AND THE IP HAS BEEN MADE. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 28 A MAURITIAN INDUSTRIALIST WHO IS CLOSE TO DUVAL SAID THAT HE

IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE SMALLER PARTIES SUCH AS THE UDM AND HAWOLDAR'S PSP SIPHONING OFF VOTES FROM THE PMSD AND IP. HE SAID THE PMSD AND THE IP HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ALERTING THE VOTERS TO THE FACT THAT THIS ELECTION WILL BE ONE BETWEEN THE "COMMUNISTS" AND THE ANTI-COMMUNISTS. THEY WILL THEREFORE NOT WASTE THEIR VOTES ON SMALLER PARTIES AS THEY UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO DEFEAT THE COMMUNISTS. THE INDUSTRIALIST SAID THAT RAMGOOLAM AND DUVAL HAVE A TACIT AGREEMENT NOT TO ATTACK EACH OTHER BUT TO CONCENTRATE THEIR CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE MMM. ALSO, ACCORDING TO THE INDUSTRIALIST, DUVAL AND RAMGOOLAM HAVE SEVRETLY AGREED THEY WILL FORM A COALITION AFTER THE ELECTIONS IF NECESSARY TO KEEP THE MMM OUT OF POWER. THIS HAS TO REMAIN SECRET, FOR ADMITTING THAT A COALITION NOW EXISTS WOULD COST BOTH PARTIES VOTES: THOSE WHO DISLIKE LABOR CAN VOTE FOR THE PMSD AND VICE VERSA, BUT IF THEY FORM A COALITION NOW THEST "ANTI" VOTERS COULD ONLY SHOW THEIR HOSTILITY BY GOING OVER TO THE MMM.

9. THE MMM KEPT UP THE PACE OF ITS WELL-ORGANIZED RACE. APPROXIMATELY 7,000 PERSONS ATTENDED THE FIRST OPEN-AIR RALLY OF THE MMM. IT WAS REPORTED IN THE PRESS THAT THE MMM HAS PRINTED 10,000 COPIES OF ITS GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, TO BE SOLD AT 5 RUPEES EACH. IT HAS ALSO PRINTED 20,000 POSTERS SHOWING ITS CANDIDATES (TO BE DISTRIBUTED AT 1,000 PER DISTRICT) AS WELL AS 100,000 SPECIMEN BALLOTS TO ASSIST VOTERS IN CHOOSING THE MMM CANDIDATES. MAUVE T-SHIRTS, BUMPER STICKERS AND CONFIDENTIAL

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PAMPHLETS ARE ALSO PLANNED.

10. THE MMM'S PAPER, LE MILITANT, PRINTED A VIOLENT, VICIOUS AND VITRIOLIC PERSONAL ATTACK ON FINANCE MINISTER RINGADOO WRITTEN AND SIGNED BY HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, RAM PYNDIAH, WHO IS RUNNING AGAINST RINGADOO FOR THE ASSEMBLY. THE PAPER CARRIED COLUMN AFTER COLUMN OF THE MOST TERRIBLE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST RINGADOO, FROM TREASON TO CORRUPTION. AMONG OTHER THINGS PYNDIAH ACCUSED RINGADOO OF HAVING COMMITTED A "GRAVE THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF THE STATE" BY HAVING A HEART OPERATION PAID FOR BY THE U.S. PENTAGON. (IT WAS PERFORMED AT BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL AND SAVED HIS LIFE.) AT THE END OF HIS ATTACK PYNDIAH CHALLENGED RINGADOO TO APPEAR FACE TO FACE WITH HIM ON TELEVISION TO DENY THESE CHARGES. (COMMENT: THE ATTACKS WILL PROBABLY CARRY CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT FOR THE READER SINCE PYNDIAH IS NOT ONLY RINGADOO'S BROTHER-IN-LAW, BUT WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH HIM FOR MANY YEARS IN THE GOVERNMENT AS FINANCIAL SECRETARY. THEREFORE MAUTITIANS ASSUME THAT PYNDIAH KNOWS WHATEVER DIRT THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT RINGADOO. HOWEVER, MANY OTHER PEOPLE CONSIDER PYNDIAH TO BE MENTALLY UNSTABLE AND HIS ANTICS MAY BE COSTING THE MMM VOTES.)

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11. LE MILITANT ALSO ACCUSED THE LABOR PARTY, IN ITS LEAD STORY OF DECEMBER 1, OF USING GOVERNMENT FUNDS AND PERSONNEL TO LAUNCH A MASSIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN IN ITS OWN FAVOR. IT REFERS TO A 40-MINUTE DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT RAMGOOLAM NOW BEING SHOWN IN THEATERS AROUND THE ISLAND WHICH IT SAYS WAS MADE AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE BY FOREIGN FILM COMPANY. (ACCORDING TO LE MILITANT SOME CINEMA-GOERS WERE SO ANGRY THAT THEY BROKE UP THE CHAIRS IN A THEATER WHERE IT WAS SHOWN.) THE PAPER ALSO REFERRED TO PRO-GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS WHICH ARE BEING PRINTED AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE AND BEING DISTRIBUTED BY THE POST OFFICE, AND 20 TONS OF LABOR PARTY FLAGS WHICH JUST ARRIVED FROM ABROAD BY AIR AND ENTERED WITHOUT PASSING THROUGH CUSTOMS.

12. AS FOR THE UDM, IT WAS REPORTED THAT IT WILL BE RUNNING IN 13 DISTRICTS ONLY AND WILL BE SUPPORTING THE IFB IN THE DISTRICTS WHERE IT IS NOT PRESENTING CANDIDATES. THE UDM WILL SUPPORT FATHER CLAIR ON RODRIGUES.

13. INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE INCREASED SOMEWHAT OVER LAST WEEK. THE NATION REPORTED THAT A CAR LOAD OF MMM THUGS ATTACKED A CAR FULL OF PMSD SUPPORTERS IN CUREPIPE. LE MILITANT ADMITTED ON THE SAME DAY THAT THERE WAS AN INCIDENT AND IT CALLED ON MMM SUPPORTERS NOT TO FALL PREY TO PROVOCATIONS BY THEIR ADVERSARIES. ANOTHER INCIDENT OF VIOLENCE WAS REPORTED BETWEEN THE PMSD AND THE MMM, THIS TIME IN BEAU BASSIS. THE PRESS CARRIED STORIES ON A NUMBER OF NEW INCIDENTS OF DISTURBANCES
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OF MEETING, MAINLY BETWEEN ADHERENTS OF THE PMSD AND THE MMM. POLICE COMMISSIONER FULENA ISSUED ANOTHER STATEMENT WARNING AGAIN ABOUT VIOLENCE, SAYING THAT RESTRICTIONS ON OPEN-AIR MEETINGS MAY HAVE TO BE REIMPOSED IF THE SITUATION DOES NOT IMPROVE.

14. ON NOVEMBER 28 THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER WEEK-END (WHICH TENDS TO FAVOR THE MMM AND THE UDM WHILE DISFAVORING THE PMSD AND THE LABOR PARTY) PUBLISHED THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF WEEKLY SURVEYS OF THE ELECTORAL SCENE, APPARENTLY BASED ON A LESS-THAN-SCIENTIFIC POLL OF THE VOTING POPULACE. ITS CONCLUSIONS NEVERTHELESS ARE INTERESTING BECAUSE THEY TEND TO GIVE HEART TO THE SUPPORTERS OF THE PMSD AND THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS FROM ITS FIRST SURVEY:

- VOTERS APPEAR TO BE LOYAL TO THE PARTIES THEY SUPPORTED IN THE 1967 ELECTIONS, THAT IS, THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY AND THE PMSD.
- VOTERS ARE MORE CONSERVATIVE THAN THEY WERE A FEW WEEKS AGO; THEY FAVOR THE "KNOWN".
- THE MMM HAS FALLEN IN FAVOR TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE IP AND EVEN MORE THE PMSD.
- THE PEOPLE FEAR THE "COMMUNISM" OF THE MMM. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD FEAR OF THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE MMM COMING TO POWER AND OF THE PROBABLE LOSS OF LIBERTIES ("MAURITIUS WOULD BECOME LIKE RUSSIA"), ESPECIALLY FREEDOM OF RELIGION. THERE IS A FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN.
- THE PMSD IS MAKING A COME-BACK.
- THE SMALLER PARTIES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO PERFORM WELL, EXCEPT FOR LESAGE OF THE UDM AND BISSOONDOYAL OF THE IFB, BOTH OF WHOM ARE LIKELY TO WIN SEATS.
- VOTERS ARE DRAWN TO THE THREE LARGE PARTIES ONLY. (COMMENT: THESE FINDINGS SEEM TO COINCIDE WITH THE CONCLUSIONS OF MOST OBSERVERS ABOUT THE CURRENT ATTITUDES OF THE ELECTORATE, BUT THERE REMAINS GREAT UNCERTAINTY ABOUT HOW THE "NEW" VOTERS -- THOSE AGED 18 TO 30 -- ARE REACTING TO THE CAMPAIGN.)

KEELEY

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